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President: Mr. Oh Joon (Vice-President) (Republic of Korea)
later: Mr. Khiari (Vice-President) (Tunisia)

Contents

Annual ministerial review: Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take
(continued)

National voluntary presentations: Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia

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In the absence of Mr. Sajdik (Austria), Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Annual ministerial review: Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: what it will take
(continued)

National voluntary presentations: Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia
(E/2015/60, E/2015/61, E/2015/62 and E/2015/63)

1. **The President** said that national voluntary presentations had been intrinsic to the Council's high-level segment, demonstrating the Council's value as a platform for engaging the global community in an exchange of critical lessons on the implementation of the agenda to achieve internationally agreed development goals. Since 2007, over 60 countries had shared their experiences and insights in the review process, some on more than one occasion.
2. The presentations offered a platform where national implementation could connect with international policymaking with regard to that agenda. They also offered an opportunity to ensure strong integration of the normative and operational areas of development in the work of the United Nations development system. Each year, volunteering countries presented policies and initiatives that merited scaling up or replication. The presentations thus offered insights and lessons learned for development, especially in the context of a new, more comprehensive and universal development agenda.
3. The participating countries in 2015 — Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the Philippines and Zambia — would offer insights on their development progress and the obstacles remaining. They would also provide guidance regarding the transition to the new global agenda, which would constitute a more integrated and ambitious framework than the current Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The key to the effectiveness of the national presentations was dialogue and feedback.
4. He invited Mr. Shank, Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus, to act as moderator for the national voluntary presentations.
5. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus), moderator, said that during the transition to the

sustainable development goals, it was important to start considering agriculture, water management, energy, economic growth, industrialization, consumption, use of oceans, use of terrestrial ecosystems, and forest management within an inclusive sustainable development framework. Governments and countries were already working fast and furiously towards the sustainable development goals.

6. Climate change was affecting all countries, and sustainable development was the necessary answer to it. Unless both the problem of climate change and the solution of sustainable development were communicated to constituencies, voters and populations alike, the international community would remain less than optimally effective in addressing them. He encouraged increasing synergy, shared resources and improved efficiency for the various United Nations bodies working on both climate change and sustainable development. The 17 sustainable development goals clearly overlapped with the climate change agenda and their integration with the sustainable development agenda must become the new standard.
7. He hoped that the Council would remain a hub for climate change conversations and would encourage preventive sustainable development solutions, to ensure that climate conflict did not cause food, water and resource security issues leading to violence.
8. The national voluntary presentation by Kyrgyzstan would be reviewed by Turkey and the Russian Federation; the presentation by Mongolia would be reviewed by Switzerland, Japan and Germany; the presentation by the Philippines would be reviewed by the United States, Malaysia and Spain; and the presentation by Zambia would be reviewed by the United States and Sweden.

Presentation by Kyrgyzstan

9. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan), drawing attention to her country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/62), said that although Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress in achieving some of the MDGs, it still faced many problems. The work undertaken to prepare the national voluntary presentation, as well as the Council's recommendation, would pave the way to solving those problems and defining an effective way

to transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals.

10. Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress with regard to MDG 1, having reached its extreme poverty reduction target in 2008. However, due to the global financial crisis in 2009 and the deterioration of the socioeconomic situation following the political events of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan, that achievement had proved difficult to maintain. Nonetheless, the Government had adopted comprehensive stabilizing measures, strengthened social support for the poorer segments of the population, and succeeded in reducing extreme poverty to 2.8 per cent, four times lower than the MDG target, by the end of 2013.

11. Overall, the environmental situation in the country was relatively favourable. Most of the targets for MDG 7 had been achieved, including those regarding greenhouse gas emissions, consumption of ozone-depleting substances and carbon dioxide emissions. In 2012, Kyrgyzstan had ranked 101st on the Environmental Performance Index, ahead of all the other Central Asian republics. Since 2005, all of the country's national policy papers had taken environmental issues into account as a key development priority.

12. The country had managed to retain high levels of literacy, with yearly increases in the number of children receiving basic general education. By the end of 2014, 98.4 per cent of children attended school. Positive trends had also been witnessed in relation to child mortality, especially the under-five mortality rate, which had dropped dramatically between 1997 and 2014. Progress had also been seen in a few of the gender equality indicators, such as the ratio of women in tertiary education. However, the issues of maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, drug use, low-quality drinking water and access to sanitation and an increase in the number of HIV and drug-resistant tuberculosis infections remained.

13. Out of the 37 MDG targets officially adopted, Kyrgyzstan had fully achieved six and made positive progress on another seven. The main reasons for its slow progress included the lengthy process of creating an institutional framework for the adoption of the MDGs; the lack of an inter-sectoral approach, where budgeting was linked to the goals; and weak financing, institutional support and strategic planning frameworks.

14. Integrating sustainable development issues into national policy instruments required improved strategic planning. To that end, the country had more than 50 sectoral programmes, and sustainable development was the top priority of both the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2013-2017 and the Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017. In addition, there were cooperation mechanisms at various levels, including the National Council for Sustainable Development, headed by the President, and the MDG Coordinating Committee, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs. Those mechanisms would be adapted in order to face the challenges of the sustainable development goals.

15. There were, however certain potential constraints to the transition process: inadequate communication between cross-sectoral forums at the national, sectoral and agency levels; insufficient attention to some targets; issues with the legislation related to strategic planning; low capacity of the public institutions responsible for strategic issues; and the need to strengthen the relevant national statistical bodies. Her Government was, however, working to adapt the global goals to local conditions in Kyrgyzstan, a mountainous and landlocked country with limited resources. It would adapt goal 14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, to ensure the sustainable use of the country's lakes and resources and preserve its mountainous ecosystems.

16. The MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda were an intrinsic part of the political course of Kyrgyzstan, which was focused on sustainable development. The mechanisms for responsibility and accountability at the global and regional levels must be closely coordinated with the national components of development in each country.

17. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that it was important that Kyrgyzstan had identified inadequate communication between cross-sectoral forums at the national, sectoral and agency levels as among the most important constraints to its transition to the sustainable development goals. The need for interagency coordination was of the essence and those goals must be integrated into strategy documents at all levels and taken up by all actors and stakeholders for the transition to succeed. He hoped that ministers would begin to be appointed with the

words "sustainable development" in their titles, thus mainstreaming the use of the concept.

18. **Mr. Ele** (Observer for Turkey), reviewer, said that Turkey noted with appreciation the intensive efforts of the Kyrgyz authorities in building and strengthening the democratic State, ensuring sustainable development, overcoming the legacy of the past, and preventing emerging risks and challenges. As national strategic documents were crucial for sustainable development, Turkey was pleased that the principles of sustainable development had been integrated into the National Sustainable Development Strategy for 2013-2017 and the Programme for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017.

19. Turkey also commended the Kyrgyz authorities for priming the country for an effective transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals and for enabling the country to participate in pilot programmes in a number of areas related to the post-2015 development agenda. The participation of national and regional institutions, as well as the aligning of strategic documents with the post-2015 agenda, would expedite the transition process. Turkey recognized that Kyrgyzstan had already achieved, and in fact surpassed, the target indicator level on extreme poverty, despite its domestic difficulties. Turkey likewise expected progress towards the achievement of the other two targets under MDG 1 regarding nutrition, and was encouraged to see that the environmental dimension was considerably favourable and that many indicators under MDG 7 had been achieved.

20. Despite the significant progress with regard to MDG 1 and 7, and a general positive trend, there was still room for more progress regarding the other MDGs. As mentioned in the national report, inadequate maternal health care and high maternal and child mortality were major concerns for Kyrgyzstan. The increased prevalence of HIV infection and the morbidity rate for other communicable diseases also posed challenges.

21. Turkey encouraged the Government of Kyrgyzstan to develop viable and comprehensive solutions to those challenges. Establishing a coordinating committee to eliminate red tape and adopting a cross-sectoral approach were options to consider. Turkey and the Kyrgyz Republic had a robust cooperative relationship in the health sector, having

signed an agreement on cooperation in health and medical sciences in 2014.

22. Turkey believed that strengthening the political, social and economic climate of Kyrgyzstan was necessary for regional stability and security. Therefore, it provided economic and technical assistance to support that country in the areas of democracy, sustainable economy, education, security, culture, justice and human rights. In addition, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency had implemented many projects in various fields in order to assist Kyrgyzstan in its sustainable development efforts. As part of its continuous commitment to development assistance, the Agency continued to support infrastructure projects such as hospitals and schools in Kyrgyzstan.

23. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation), reviewer, said that despite difficulties, Kyrgyzstan had achieved progress in five out of the seven MDGs, which was a good result. His delegation especially noted the country's achievements in decreasing extreme poverty, ensuring environmental sustainability, decreasing child and infant mortality, lowering rates of malaria infection, increasing access to education and promoting gender equality. Thanks to sensible and strategic policies, those goals had become attainable for the first time. It was important to fully integrate the MDGs into the development process and to view them as a blueprint for moving the country forward in keeping with its national priorities.

24. The main challenges facing Kyrgyzstan in the post-2015 development context were the need to eliminate discrepancies in achievements between the country's different regions, to close social gaps and to overcome negative trends in maternal mortality. He sought more information about the measures that the Kyrgyz Government would adopt in that regard, how civil society and the Government would work together to solve those issues, and what donors should expect.

25. For its part, the Russian Federation would continue to support the sustainable development of Kyrgyzstan through bilateral efforts and within the multilateral context, in accordance with its existing agreements regarding economic and technical cooperation within the Eurasian Economic Union. It had, for example, allocated \$200 million to assisting Kyrgyzstan with sustainable development from 2015 to 2017. In March 2015, work had begun on the

Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund, with an initial capital of \$500 million. Russian assistance to the country was also provided on a multilateral basis through targeted donations to the United Nations system, humanitarian cooperation and regular food donations. In April 2014, the Russian Federation had sent 2,000 tonnes of wheat flour to Kyrgyzstan, and in 2015, it had made \$22 million in donations to United Nations funding for school meals in the country. In addition, it had made a one-time contribution to many countries, including Kyrgyzstan, for foodstuffs, totalling \$3 million.

26. In 2013, the Russian Federation had led a project called "access to quality education" in the Kyrgyz Republic to create Russian-language educational materials through a targeted contribution of \$500,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). More than 100,000 Russian-language texts had been printed, as well as 10,000 methodological textbooks for instructors. As a result, literacy in both languages had improved.

27. The Russian Federation had also contributed \$2.5 million to UNICEF for improved access to water, sanitation and hygiene. It had provided \$3.5 million to the United Nations Development Programme for the economic development of Kyrgyzstan. In addition, a cooperation project for sanitary control had been implemented with a renewable yearly donation of \$100,000. Finally, the Russian Federation was improving projects to create employment through a \$2 million voluntary contribution to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and was prepared to continue aiding Kyrgyzstan in many other areas.

28. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that Kyrgyzstan had developed a comprehensive national programme to achieve the MDGs and was very grateful to all countries that had provided support, especially the Russian Federation. Her Government had adopted a disaster risk reduction plan which required it to adapt its policies to the new economic realities it faced. The plan laid out measures for the adoption of laws to promote transparency and to protect businesses, State bodies, civil society organizations and all democratic processes in the country.

29. However, the inability to achieve the MDGs regarding health care was a cause for concern. The country was consequently developing a health-care plan which it hoped would help to lower maternal

mortality rates and improve the overall state of health care in the country. With regard to the future and the sustainable development goals, the Government intended to use donor assistance and resources from abroad more effectively, as outlined in its national sustainable development programme.

30. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that, unlike the MDGs, the sustainable development goals contained common language that would make it easier to monitor the effectiveness of such programmes. For example, the goals sought to determine whether it was socially sustainable or even possible for someone living on a minimum wage or on less than \$1 or \$2 a day to pursue everything he or she needed to do, in the areas of health, education, economic mobility, financial markets and environmental sustainability. It was important to use the three pillars of sustainable development in common conversation, and to hold them up as metrics for voters and the public to use, thus mainstreaming them into everyday language.

Presentation by Mongolia

31. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia), drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/61), said that in recent decades his country had been able to make the transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. It had developed a sustainable development action programme for the twenty-first century to promote environmental protection and the efficient use of natural resources. However, implementation of the programme had been slow owing to factors such as the Asian economic crisis and his country's weak policy coordination system. Furthermore, agreements with international banks and financial institutions during the transition period had been focused on maintaining macroeconomic stability, liberalizing the economy and reducing the budget deficit rather than on development priorities and social, infrastructure and environmental needs.

32. The MDGs had played a critical role in the development of medium- and long-term national development policies and the creation of the related implementation mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation systems. His Government had been rolling out its MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy for 2008-2021, and its Green

Development Policy, adopted in 2014, with a view to creating an enabling environment for the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

33. Mongolia had expanded and strengthened its development cooperation with international organizations, with positive results. Grants and concessional loans had been used to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs and implementation of the Comprehensive National Development Strategy. His country had experienced strong economic growth over the past 14 years, with the average annual gross domestic product (GDP) increasing from 5.6 per cent in 2000-2005 to 6.7 per cent in 2005-2010 and 10.7 per cent in 2010-2014. As a result, Mongolia was now considered a lower-middle-income country rather than a low-income country. As of 2014, its gross national income per capita was \$4,070.

34. His country had fully achieved MDGs 4 and 5, and had achieved its target on the development of new information communications technology under MDG 8. Progress had been made on gender equality, including women's participation in political decision-making, and the national poverty rate had been reduced from 36.3 per cent in 1995 to 21.6 per cent in 2014. Mongolia had also set a goal of strengthening human rights and fostering democratic governance, as it considered those elements to be essential conditions for the achievement of all of the other MDGs. Consequently, the Government had taken concrete action to promote transparency, encourage participation and combat corruption, with the result that Mongolia ranked 80th in the 2014 Corruption Perception Index, compared with 120th in 2011.

35. However, some of the MDGs had not been fully achieved, including the goals to reduce youth unemployment, and the prevalence of tuberculosis, and to protect the environment, especially with regard to reducing air pollution in urban areas, including in Ulaanbaatar.

36. Looking ahead, there was an urgent need to create an integrated development policy system that would enable realistic development policy planning based on current methodologies and trends; improve the legal framework governing sustainable development; and build the capacities of those responsible for policy planning. Mongolia had great potential to contribute to global sustainable development by producing and exporting high-quality

organic food products, developing an ecotourism industry and generating solar and wind energy for export to Asian markets. Increased integration of States in the region and infrastructure development in Asia would likely create a favourable environment for the development of Mongolia.

37. While implementation of the sustainable development goals presented great opportunities, his country was also facing many challenges. It would be vital for it to diversify its economy, which had become more dependent on copper and coking coal exports and was, as a result, more vulnerable to price fluctuations in international markets and demand from a small number of States. Industrialization, which was another priority for his Government, was hindered by limited opportunities for the adoption of innovative and advanced technologies. Furthermore, the general population had little understanding or awareness of sustainable development.

38. The Government's priorities would include developing strategies to achieve essential social development targets, such as reducing inequality and increasing the size of the middle class. The national Green Development Policy had been designed to promote environmentally friendly, effective and inclusive growth and would play a key role in the achievement of the sustainable development goals, such as eradicating poverty, providing water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, reducing the negative impact of climate change and environmental pollution, and creating stable employment through inclusive and participatory economic growth. Ensuring coherence between the sustainable development goals, the Green Development Policy and national long-term development policies would generate environmental, social and economic benefits, help to create green jobs in every sector and reduce poverty and unemployment.

39. Development cooperation should aim to improve governance and the capacity of public institutions, ensure consistent implementation of policies, improve policy cohesion and coordination, and ensure optimal coordination across the three pillars of sustainable development. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems for government initiatives would make a significant contribution to good governance and the achievement of the sustainable development goals. With regard to specific proposals for cooperation, his country hoped to make use of international financing mechanisms, including the Green Climate Fund.

40. His Government called for international mobilization and collective action and cooperation, in the belief that joint efforts were indispensable to promote sustainable development and establish a healthy and secure society for the next generation.

41. **Mr. Wennubst** (Switzerland), reviewer, said that more than a decade after the three natural disasters that had ruined the pastoral system in Mongolia, the Government had been able to improve the country's resilience and the well-being of its citizens. Falling commodity prices and the unattractiveness of the pastoral livelihood to young people were challenges, however.

42. In an effort to achieve the MDGs, the Government had established national development targets and indicators, and increased to 50 per cent the proportion of the State budget allocated to education, social welfare and poverty reduction. Although the adoption in 2008 of the MDG-based Comprehensive National Development Strategy had resulted in better development planning, progress towards the Goals and the reduction of poverty, the Government should establish institutions able to link long-term goals to medium- and short-term policies.

43. His delegation welcomed the early achievement of some of the MDGs, the consolidation of democratic institutions and the strengthening of political rights. The Mongolian Government should set achievable targets for that it had set for itself, namely to strengthen human rights and foster democratic governance, and should increase women's participation in politics and decision-making. The target related to the development of trade and the financial system, contained in Goal 8, was essential to the post-2015 development agenda. The country's dependence on mining revenues made it vulnerable to external fluctuations and its jeopardized sustainable development.

44. Mongolia must translate its rapid economic growth into social development. Public revenues should be used to create jobs and raise incomes among vulnerable groups. His Government welcomed the Mongolian Government's approach to the transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals, and was reviewing its own national sustainable development strategy to align it with the post-2015 development agenda. It looked forward to sharing

experiences of national implementation of the MDG agenda with Mongolia and other countries.

45. **Mr. Nakane** (Japan), reviewer, said that the ability of Mongolia to meet the challenges of the transition to a market economy and those of natural disasters and the Asian financial crisis was an example to other countries. It was encouraging to see that the Government had produced long-, medium- and short-term national development policies, taking into account the discussions on international development since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, and the promotion, since democratization in 1990, of structural reforms intended to produce a market economy.

46. His delegation welcomed the efforts made by Mongolia to become a lower-middle-income country and to achieve the MDGs related to child mortality, maternal health and HIV/AIDS, and the progress towards gender equality. The widening gap between rich and poor meant, however, that industry needed to be diversified, the distribution of resources reviewed, social services improved and youth employment promoted. Disparities between the capital and other areas of the country should be addressed.

47. The high-quality development pursued by Mongolia would be the basis for sustainable development by 2030. The Naryn Guur elevated bridge in Ulaanbaatar had been built using advanced technologies that would prevent it from collapsing in the event of an earthquake. Foreign construction technologies were presented to students and engineers through seminars and on-site tours.

48. The mobilization of private capital and foreign direct investment in Mongolia, in addition to government funding and official development assistance, was essential for the implementation of the future development agenda, given the recent diversification of development resources and actors. Japan and Mongolia had been and would continue working in close collaboration to advance their strategic partnership. Japan was the largest donor to Mongolia, and in February 2015, the two countries had signed an economic partnership agreement, the first such agreement ever signed by Mongolia. Mongolia had also established its first joint crediting mechanism for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with Japan.

49. Japan attached a high priority in its official development assistance to strengthening urban functionality in Ulaanbaatar. He requested further information on how the Government of Mongolia planned to address the concentration of the population in that city; and on the causes of the high rate of inflation in the country and how the Government planned to address them.

50. The middle class must be strengthened and sustainable industrialization promoted in order to eradicate poverty. It would be useful to know what the Government was doing to encourage small and medium-sized enterprises, which were essential to inclusive economic growth. Given that air pollution and water contamination were grave problems in Ulaanbaatar, he asked what the Government had done to ensure economic development while conserving the environment.

51. **Mr. Gies** (Germany), reviewer, said that Mongolia had taken crucial steps in the transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals. It had undergone fundamental political and social changes, with rapid and peaceful democratic and market development and the incorporation into national policies of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

52. The links between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development must be taken into account, particularly in the countryside, where many Mongolians depended on fragile ecosystems. The vulnerability of livestock to natural disasters, exacerbated by climate change and biodiversity loss, was a significant cause of poverty. Mongolia, where annual mean temperatures had increased by 2.1°C between 1940 and 2007, was one of the countries most affected by climate change. Rural Mongolians often migrated to cities in search of income, with the result that half of the population lived in the capital, where unplanned urban growth was a problem. Revenue from the country's mineral resources must benefit everyone, and the negative effects of mining on the environment must be avoided.

53. Despite economic, environmental and fiscal constraints, Mongolia had adapted the MDGs through national policies and institutional reforms, showing the importance of strengthened capacities and effective institutions to sustainable development. The Goals

were embedded in national policies in the form of development benchmarks. Development goals should be adapted to national circumstances and their implementation should be given a high priority to help in development planning, fiscal policy, and monitoring and evaluation.

54. Mongolia had taken steps to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MDG agenda, including by submitting five national progress reports. His delegation welcomed the inclusion of the local and national levels in the review mechanism and the planned strengthening of monitoring and evaluation in 2015. Mongolia should be at the forefront of monitoring progress towards the sustainable development goals, share its experiences with other countries and build on the data and statistical capacities gained through such initiatives as the pilot project to support the National Poverty and Millennium Development Goals Monitoring and Assessment System. A multi-stakeholder approach to reviewing the sustainable development goals should be taken.

55. His delegation welcomed the Mongolian Government's intention to ensure a successful transition from the MDGs to the sustainable development goals through a holistic approach and the stringent interlinking of social and economic development with environmental sustainability; the integration of the sustainable development goals into relevant policies; institutional stability; the involvement of the private sector, civil society and academia; the improvement of policy coherence through better links between development planning, fiscal policy, monitoring, and data and statistics; and the adaptation of policies to the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability. Mongolia had developed initial ideas for reflecting the sustainable development goals in its development strategies.

56. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia), said that the Mongolian economy was heavily dependent on mining, which accounted for 90 per cent of export revenue and 50 per cent of budget revenue. The 50 per cent decrease in mineral prices in the previous three years had therefore resulted in a significant fall in export and fiscal revenues. The external environment was the greatest obstacle to the achievement of the MDGs. Diversification would render the economy more resilient to such shocks, and his Government

would promote tourism and organic foods to reduce the effects of fluctuations in mineral prices.

57. The experience of the MDGs had helped Mongolia plan its pursuit of the sustainable development goals. His Government had submitted to parliament a national planning law, to be approved by the end of 2015, clarifying institutional roles and responsibilities and enabling inclusive planning with the participation of government institutions, civil society, citizens and the media, in pursuit of the sustainable development goals. Since the transition to a market economy in 1990, his Government had made every effort to foster democracy, human rights and gender equality, although further improvement was possible.

58. Pollution was the largest problem for the population of Ulaanbaatar, half of whom lived in traditional tents heated by coal stoves. His Government had provided more environmentally friendly coal stoves and invested in infrastructure to eliminate such pollution within 10 years. The 2015 inflation target was 9 per cent, down from 14 per cent in 2014. One of the main causes of inflation in the country was that more than half of the goods consumed were imported, and exchange rate risks resulting from currency depreciation meant that the price of such goods had risen. The medium-term inflation target was 7 per cent.

59. His Government was ready to exchange experiences of implementing the MDG agenda with other countries. Such sharing was important for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. State support for the mining industry over the previous 10 years had resulted in environmental damage, which had affected rural people in particular. In an effort to achieve the sustainable development goals, his Government would promote less environmentally harmful mining and restrict further expansion of the sector, focusing instead on tourism and ecologically friendly products.

60. *Mr. Khiari (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the chair.*

Presentation by the Philippines

61. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines), drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/60), said that good governance was crucial to

sustainable development and it was therefore significant that much of the implementation period for the MDG agenda had coincided with a period of political uncertainty in the Philippines. Under former President Joseph Estrada, the Government had given priority to poverty reduction but its anti-poverty programme had been discontinued when his presidential term had been cut short. Under his successor, President Arroyo, national development plans had again focused on achieving prosperity for as many people as possible and reducing poverty, and national targets for 2010 had been set alongside the targets set for 2015 as part of the MDGs. In addition, directives had been issued on the institutional arrangements for the implementation and oversight of the MDG agenda. However, frequent challenges to the legitimacy of the Government had adversely affected fiscal allocations for the public goods and social services required to achieve the MDGs.

62. In 2010, under President Benigno Aquino III, the Government had established a national development plan focused on implementing governance reforms, promoting inclusive growth and generating quality employment. The Cabinet had been organized into thematic clusters to allow for better coordination of policies, programmes and projects relating to social development and the MDGs. As a result of governance and policy reforms in recent years, the Philippines had become one of the fastest-growing emerging economies in Asia and the world. However, the country's MDG accomplishments were mixed. While improvements had been noted for certain development indicators, performance for other indicators had been moderate if not weak. The country had been successful in areas in which the targets clearly indicated the interventions needed and where accountability had been clearly established. For other targets, progress could not be ascertained owing to a lack of updated data.

63. In 2003, the country had been on track to meet the target of reducing poverty by at least 0.72 percentage points per year under MDG 1, as poverty had been reduced from 34.4 per cent in 1991 to 24.9 per cent in 2003, only to worsen in 2009. Over the previous five years, robust economic growth and improved fiscal space meant that the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger had gained traction again and the Government was now monitoring poverty annually instead of every three

years. Using first-semester data, the incidence of poverty had increased marginally in 2014 compared to 2013, which demonstrated the need for a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy.

64. The Government was investing heavily in social services and, since 2008, had been transferring modest amounts of money to poor households under its conditional cash transfer programme, which now covered one fifth of the population and had been enhanced to include livelihood and community empowerment programmes. The increase in poverty in 2014 was partly the result of disasters in 2013 and food price inflation in the first half of 2014, which highlighted the need to introduce measures to reduce vulnerability.

65. On lessons learned, the Government was now aware that attainment of the MDGs required a sustained and consistent commitment among all stakeholders. In addition, the commitment of the political leadership must resonate across all levels of the bureaucracy and must be sustained from one administration to another, given that implementation of the sustainable development goals agenda would span four administrations in the Philippines.

66. For strategies to be effective, the implementation plan should include a financing component to ensure that there was uninterrupted growth over a reasonable length of time, coupled with significant investments in health, education and social protection to empower the poor. Between 2000 and 2003, public spending on social services had fallen each year and it was only over the previous four years that spending had increased significantly. The implementation plan should also include programmes to build resilience against natural and man-made disasters and economic shocks; those should target the poor in particular, given that they typically lived in areas most prone to natural disasters. Development programmes must include strategies to address the vulnerabilities of communities and their residents, and should incorporate disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation measures and risk transfer or insurance mechanisms.

67. There should be a clear assignment of responsibilities consistent with the governance structure. A 2003 directive had given some national government agencies responsibility for addressing specific MDG targets, but the local government code of 1991 had already devolved the responsibility for

providing basic services from those national government agencies to autonomous local government units. As a result, some of the national agencies assigned had lacked the direct mandate to deliver the needed services and local government units had in turn lacked the capacity to plan and implement programmes to meet the Goals.

68. The Philippines remained committed to achieving the MDGs even beyond 2015 and had taken corrective measures to address the shortcomings noted. In addition, the Government was working to create a sustainable development framework with economic, social and environmental dimensions. To mobilize funds to promote the development goals, the Government's strategy was focused on achieving sustained economic growth, in order to create the necessary fiscal space. To that end, the Government was drawing on funds from official development assistance and grants to implement two poverty reduction programmes, and was establishing public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in order to free up resources for human and social development.

69. Given the country's intrinsic vulnerabilities, building resilience was also a priority; in that connection, the Government had invested heavily in technology and infrastructure to improve its disaster risk reduction and mitigation systems. It was also considering disaster risk financing to ensure funding for reconstruction in cases of catastrophe without having to compromise fiscal sustainability. That financing option could be made more affordable with greater global cooperation to improve the risk portfolio.

70. With the large numbers of its nationals working and living abroad, the Philippines was also vulnerable to external shocks. The Government therefore promoted national, bipartite and multilateral arrangements to address that concern. Lastly, the country needed an appropriate data monitoring system to support the accountability mechanism and allow for tracking of development targets. The system should provide timely information in line with assigned responsibilities. However, creating such a system would require huge financial resources and expertise. The Government therefore called on the international community and multilateral agencies to provide financial contributions to that end.

71. **Mr. Erdman** (United States of America), reviewer, said that many of the lessons learned by the Philippines could be applied to other countries. His delegation welcomed the insights on matching political commitment with financing, the need for a sustained commitment from all stakeholders and the importance of good governance with clear responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. The Philippines had made encouraging progress towards achieving the MDGs by reducing poverty and child mortality, improving maternal health and working to overcome HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. In addition, the country had been most successful in addressing commitments involving a specific policy action or clearly established accountability, such as the targets under MDG 7 concerning environmental sustainability.
72. Noting the importance of economic growth and fiscal space and the mobilization of both public and private resources in financing social programmes, he requested further information on the Government's plans to ensure that financing and political commitments were correlated, and on the experience of the Philippines with public-private partnerships. He also wondered what the Government was doing to strengthen resilience, minimize the impact of man-made and natural disasters and prevent those events from undermining poverty reduction efforts.
73. It was encouraging that a high level of political support had been given to the attainment of the MDGs and that the Government of the Philippines had learned key lessons relating to the clear assignment of responsibilities consistent with the governance structure. His delegation requested further information on the lessons learned and the failures, including the measures taken to correct them, given that countries could learn as much from their failures as from their successes. Lastly, it requested further information on the use of data in steering policymakers.
74. **Mr. Raja Zaib Shah** (Observer for Malaysia), reviewer, said that the Government of the Philippines had made commendable efforts to place the MDGs at the centre of policy discussions in regular Cabinet-level meetings, with explicit support from the legislative branch. However, the occurrence of natural disasters had affected the realization of the MDGs, and such disasters tended to move non-poor families into poverty and poor families into greater poverty. It was therefore critical that investment should be channelled into building resilience and in disaster preparedness.
75. Having faced its own operational and political challenges, Malaysia recognized that the Government of the Philippines continued to face challenges in implementing the MDGs. Good governance was crucial to ensure the success of the development agenda. His delegation sought further information on the financing strategy that the Philippines planned to adopt to achieve the MDGs, given its limited resources. It also wondered what role the private sector was expected to play in achieving those Goals. Lastly, as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Malaysia would continue to support the Philippines in its development efforts and would remain a committed partner in addressing regional and global development challenges.
76. **Mr. Díaz de la Guardia Beuno** (Observer for Spain), reviewer, said that it was very difficult to provide education, health services and infrastructure in a country with a population that was distributed across some 7,000 islands. His delegation wondered how the Government of the Philippines managed the islands with small populations and whether there was a development gap between the more populated islands and the less populated islands. It also sought further information on how environmental issues were considered in the country's development plans.
77. With regard to migration from rural to urban areas, he wondered whether there was now a large influx of people arriving in cities and if so whether the cities were able to cope with the growing populations. He also sought further information on the comprehensive agrarian reform programme, including whether it had been a success. Lastly, he asked whether the Government of the Philippines would do anything different now if it could go back to the inception of the MDGs.
78. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that the Government was working to strengthen economic growth in order to create the fiscal space needed to finance both the MDGs and the sustainable development goals, and was keenly aware that one-dimensional development in the social or environmental spheres without economic growth would not be sustainable. However, it was also working to combat corruption and poor governance, raise tax revenues and improve the delivery of public programmes and projects. To that end, it was mobilizing the private sector and development partners to leverage the country's limited resources.

79. With regard to the role of the private sector in sustainable development, the Philippines was largely a private sector-driven country, with 90 per cent of the economy in private hands, and many social services and the financial and insurance sectors were dominated by private sector enterprises. The Government was focusing its efforts on improving access to inclusive finance and insurance for all sectors, including small and medium-sized enterprises. It was also incorporating the private sector into the provision of public infrastructure through public-private partnerships. Those partnerships allowed it to gain access to the technology and information available in the private sector and to create fiscal space needed for social investments.
80. If the private sector were to play a larger role in the development of infrastructure, public resources that would have otherwise been used for that purpose could instead be channelled into much-needed investments in health care, education and social protection. Education and health care were also dominated by the private sector and the Government was using the private sector to facilitate country-wide implementation of the conditional cash transfer programme.
81. To minimize the impact of man-made and natural shocks, the Government was investing in disaster preparedness. The impact of shocks had been tremendous in terms of lives lost, damage to property and increased poverty, not to mention the effect on the national economy. Studies had shown that returns on investment in disaster preparedness were very high and were even higher than for most traditional infrastructure projects. The Government had adopted a "building back better" policy to ensure that, following a disaster infrastructure was rebuilt to a better state than prior to the disaster. It was working with the United Nations, the World Bank and other development partners to overcome technological and institutional challenges it faced in pursuing that policy.
82. The Government was also working with the World Bank and other development partners to establish a multi-layer insurance programme for the country and to expand access to insurance at the national and provincial levels for local governments, firms and households. The country could save substantial resources and prevent people from sliding into poverty if an insurance system was in place, but it needed assistance from its development partners in the form of analytical capability, technology and know-how.
83. The geography of the Philippines meant that addressing inequity, poverty and disasters was very complicated, as the various areas of the country were separated by seas. In addition, infrastructure around the country was quite poor and the nation was very diverse geographically, economically, socially and culturally. As a result, there was no one-size-fits-all response and the solution to poverty could vary considerably from one part of the country to another.
84. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that some of the challenges faced by the Philippines had also been faced by the United States of America. In particular, the economic growth sustained following the 2008-2009 crisis had not benefited all United States citizens, and the country's industries had been damaged by disaster and extreme weather. Localization of the post-2015 development agenda was crucial, and it was vital that local government units and non-governmental units should work together to achieve the sustainable development goals. He requested further information on how the media was employed to deepen the appreciation and understanding of the MDGs, and how it would be employed and deployed going forward.
85. **Mr. Percaya** (Observer for Indonesia) said that the challenges faced by developing countries in achieving the MDGs included obstacles to financing of an appropriate data system. It was important to strengthen the global partnership for development in order to generate the financial support needed to promote the transfer of technology to build those data systems. ASEAN had developed a road map to support the efforts of its member States to accelerate achievement of the MDGs. The Governments of the Philippines and Indonesia were actively working to implement that road map and would continue to cooperate in the pursuit of the MDGs and the sustainable development goals. His delegation wished to know what strategy the Philippines was pursuing to build the data systems required for sustainable development.
86. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that the media was quite free and very active in the Philippines. It was important to invest in good data collection, analysis and administration, to ensure that the information picked up by the media and other stakeholders was evidence-based. Many of the instances of conflict with the media had arisen because the data available had not been of a scientific standard,

and it was common to see media reports incorrectly portraying localized situations as national problems. Comprehensive data should be provided in a timely manner and good data analysis was therefore required. The media was seen as a development partner and it played a crucial role in providing the accountability and transparency that were required to achieve the MDGs and the sustainable development goals. However, the media should be able to pick up on quality information readily, and the country needed to invest aggressively in good collection and analysis.

87. There was no one-size-fits-all solution to the problems faced all over the country, especially as natural disasters affected different parts of the country at different times. Frequent data collection was vital so that the Government was aware of changes that were taking place in the welfare of certain sectors of the population.

88. In addition to chronic poverty, which accounted for three quarters of total poverty in the country, the Government was also working to tackle transitory poverty, which arose when people slipped into poverty following a disaster because they did not have insurance. Unfortunately, good data on those affected by transitory poverty were not available. However, fiscal space had expanded following a period of economic growth and the country was now in a position to fund data collection, but what it needed most from its development partners, especially its bilateral and multilateral partners, was the technology and know-how for data collection. Access to expertise and best practices was more important than financial resources, as the country had the resources but lacked the expertise, and it needed to move fast in building capacities.

Presentation by Zambia

89. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia), accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation and drawing attention to his country's report on progress towards the achievement of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (E/2015/63), said that Zambia was a landlocked country with a favourable climate for agriculture and tourism. Its population of 15 million was spread over a large territory of 752,612 km², with 60 per cent living in rural areas, which posed challenges for service delivery. His Government's efforts to achieve the MDGs had been focused on

broad-based wealth creation, citizen participation, inclusive growth, job creation and rural development. Strengthening the economy had also been a priority, as poor economic performance had a negative impact on project implementation.

90. Inflation had peaked at 187.1 per cent in 1993 but had been kept under 10 per cent for the past decade. The gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate, which had been stagnant in the early 1990s, had reached 3.5 per cent in 2000 and had remained above 6 per cent since 2005. Foreign direct investment had increased from less than \$357 million in 2000 to \$2.2 billion in 2014. The Government was working to grow the agricultural, tourism and manufacturing sectors in order to decrease the economy's dependence on mineral exports. The external debt had been reduced from 179 per cent of GDP in 2002 to 10 per cent in 2007 and currently stood at 15 per cent. Official development assistance now represented 3 per cent of GDP compared with 5.9 per cent in 2009.

91. Despite that progress, poverty rates remained high, at 60.5 per cent overall and 77.9 per cent in rural areas, as the investment that had driven economic growth had been largely restricted to the mining sector. Furthermore, 75 per cent of the labour force was employed in the informal sector, where scant use of technology was keeping productivity levels low. Thus, MDG 1 had not been achieved.

92. With regard to MDG 3, gender parity had been reached in primary school enrolment, but had fallen in secondary school enrolment. The youth literacy rate had increased from 70.1 per cent in 2000 to 88.7 per cent in 2010, but the ratio of literate women to men had remained constant. Secondary school enrolment and completion rates had improved slightly. The ratio of women to men in tertiary education had grown over the past five years.

93. While MDGs 4 and 5 had not been achieved, progress had been made and was expected to continue: maternal mortality had declined from 729 per 100,000 births in 2002 to 398 per 100,000 births in 2013/14, under-five mortality from 191 per 1,000 births in 1992 to 75 per 1,000 births in 2013/14, and infant mortality from 107 per 1,000 births in 1992 to 45 per 1,000 births in 2013/14. Mortality rates were higher in rural areas, and there was a negative correlation between mortality rates and levels of education and income among women. The proportion of one-year-olds

immunized against measles had improved from 77 per cent in 1992 to 94 per cent in 2010, and now stood at 84 per cent, while the contraceptive prevalence rate had increased from 7 per cent in 1992 to 44.8 per cent in 2013/14.

94. Progress on MDG 6 had exceeded expectations: HIV prevalence stood at 13 per cent, compared with the national target of 15.6 per cent. Zambia was on track to meet the target of reducing the number of new HIV infections among children by 90 per cent by 2015, but girls and women continued to be disproportionately affected by the virus.

95. The percentage of the population with access to clean drinking water had increased to 63.1 per cent in 2013/14 from 49.0 per cent in 1991, which represented progress towards achieving MDG 7 and had also contributed to the decline in infant and child mortality rates. However, the increase in the proportion of the population without access to an improved sanitation facility from 26 per cent in 1991 to 72.7 per cent in 2010 was a cause for concern. With regard to biodiversity, the amount of officially protected land had remained relatively stable, but the actual amount of land covered by forest had fallen from 59.8 per cent to 49.9 per cent, primarily owing to an annual loss of between 250,000 and 300,000 hectares of forest to illegal felling.

96. Progress had been made on MDG 8. Official development assistance to Zambia had increased from 4.6 per cent of GDP in 2006 to 5.9 per cent in 2009, before falling to 3 per cent in 2013 as a result of the country's transition from low-income to lower-middle-income status. Grants had accounted for 0.8 per cent of Zambian GDP in 2013. The number of cellular telephone subscribers had grown from 50,000 in 2000 to over 10 million in 2012, although the functionality of many of those telephones was very basic. Internet penetration had increased from 17.3 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2012 to 18.5 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2013.

97. Challenges in the implementation of the MDG agenda had included the lack of a comprehensive legal framework, weak linkages between the national development plans and the medium-term expenditure framework, and poor coordination within and among the various levels of government. The national planning and budgeting policy adopted in 2014 would be reinforced by the national planning and budgeting

act, which was expected to be adopted before the end of 2015. The new framework would support the implementation of the sustainable development goals agenda by ensuring effective planning and coordination between different government departments and facilitating a bottom-up approach to planning, with the involvement of a broad range of stakeholders, including civil society and grass-roots organizations, government departments and the international community.

98. The national approach to the implementation of the goals would focus on the promotion of greater social justice and equity in access to the fundamental drivers of development. Priorities would therefore include education, health care, food security, decent work, equality and economic diversification. Means would have to be found to generate revenue from the country's vast natural resources and to ensure equitable distribution of that revenue. National capacity to transform deep-rooted socio-cultural norms and values that inhibited participation in national processes had to be enhanced. That would be particularly challenging with regard to children's and women's issues, including child marriage.

99. It would also be important to promote technological development and innovation. Through its budgeting and planning policy, the Government was seeking to establish participatory nation-building, transparency and accountability. It also aimed to build the implementation capacity of national institutions in order to swiftly achieve development goals. Additionally, targeted programmes would be developed to empower vulnerable population groups.

100. The Zambian experience had revealed that outcome-based approaches produced better results than output-based approaches. For example, Goals 2 and 6 had been achieved as a result of efforts to strengthen institutional arrangements, establish appropriate policies and legislation and ensure broad participation. Feeding programmes, cash transfers, advocacy work and legislative and policy reforms had been jointly implemented by various entities to encourage school attendance. Similarly, an integrated approach to combatting HIV/AIDS, which had involved the creation of a well-structured national AIDS council, policy reform, enhancement of community awareness and increased access to treatment, had contributed to the achievement of MDG 6.

101. In contrast, the output-based approach to MDGs 4, 5 and 7 had been less successful. The failure to link outputs to overall outcomes had led to institutions operating in silos, and linkages between secondary and tertiary education and child mortality and maternal health had not been defined or adequately addressed. Similarly, improvement in infrastructure, including roads, electricity, water and sanitation, had not been identified as relevant to the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5. There had been a lack of coherence between policies and legislation on deforestation and the agricultural and industrial sectors, and efforts to promote the use of alternative energy sources had not included anti-deforestation measures. In future, action on climate change should be mainstreamed across the agricultural, energy and water sectors.

102. Ensuring that institutions were effective, transparent and accountable would be critical to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. That would include investment in data generation and effective monitoring, to enable institutions to make evidence-based decisions and better coordinate policies and plans. The lack of a strong legal and political framework for the implementation of the MDG agenda had resulted in weak linkages between plans and budgets and conflict between national and local development priorities. Furthermore, work on the MDGs had been primarily Government-led, and the limited involvement of citizens and interest groups had contributed to weak national ownership, poor public accountability and resource shortages. The new planning and budgeting framework was expected to prevent such problems in future.

103. The transformative approach of the sustainable development goals would provide a basis for social justice and dovetailed with Zambian values and development principles as well as with the Government's vision for the period up to 2030. Domestication of the goals would be ensured through broad-based engagement and the recognition that the goals were universal and, consequently, necessitated a new and equitable development cooperation architecture. The country's failure to achieve the MDGs would be taken into account in the national development plan for achieving the sustainable development goals.

104. The new goals would provide the Government with an opportunity to strengthen measures to support the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action

for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020, adopt a comprehensive rights-based and equitable approach to national development, address the challenges of policy coordination and implementation, and mainstream all cross-cutting issues.

105. To bring about inclusive economic development and generate sufficient resources to ensure investment in social inclusion and improve the well-being of all Zambians, the country would have to embrace new technologies that would simultaneously improve living standards and address ecological challenges. The Government would also endeavour to involve the private sector in the effort to achieve the sustainable development goals by creating a comprehensive mechanism that would benefit all parties.

106. **Mr. Erdman** (United States of America), reviewer, said that the immense improvements in Zambia since the 1990s, spurred in part by the political and social stability in the country, demonstrated that sustainable development entailed sustained commitment. Zambia was an ethnically diverse country, but its Government had effectively developed a sense of nationhood and, consequently, a commitment to national development aspirations among the population. He asked what was being done to address the disproportionate levels of poverty that remained in rural areas in spite of the commendable macroeconomic progress that had been achieved.

107. Zambia had made impressive progress on reducing under-five mortality rates and improving access to reproductive health services, although the decline in maternal mortality, while significant, was less than expected. Noting the challenges that Zambia faced in making the transition to lower-middle-income status, he asked how that new status would impact future development policies and planning. He would also be interested to hear more about specific plans to improve governance in development planning, and about the data-related challenges and successes that had been experienced in relation to the country's MDG performance indicators. In conclusion, a description of the mistakes that had been made in Zambia would be of benefit to other Member States.

108. **Mr. Skoog** (Sweden), reviewer, said that his country had been cooperating with Zambia for fifty

years, during which time that country had made impressive progress. Zambia faced considerable transport and infrastructure challenges resulting from its status as a large, landlocked country. His delegation welcomed the Government's commitment to maintain high levels of economic growth while working to ensure equitable distribution of wealth, as well as its recognition that good governance, accountability, transparency, the rule of law and inclusive politics and participation were essential to maintaining sustainable development and promoting social cohesion.

109. He asked for concrete examples of how the Government intended to maintain its 6 per cent annual economic growth rate while also ensuring the improvement of human development indicators. He assumed that its approach would cover education, health care, food security and increased opportunities for women and youth.

110. While he recognized that Zambia currently had a low level of carbon emissions, he would be interested to hear how the Government planned to ensure that the country's extraction, tourism and agricultural sectors were being developed in a sustainable manner. He would also like to know how the Government planned to involve a broader range of stakeholders, including women and young people, in its strategic planning for the sustainable development goals.

111. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia) said that the key lesson to be learned from his country's experience in implementing the MDG agenda was the importance of coordination between sectors. The national planning and budgeting policy had been introduced in 2014 to resolve difficulties that had been experienced in that regard. The national planning and budgeting act, which would provide the necessary means to enforce the policy, was in the final stages of drafting. The law would provide for national, provincial and district development coordinating committees covering all sectors and comprising representatives of the Government, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and traditional leaders, with a view to facilitating cross-sectoral coordination and the participation of relevant stakeholders, for a successful implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

112. Zambia had achieved political and social stability despite having a population comprising 73 ethnic groups, thanks largely to the "one Zambia, one nation" concept introduced under the country's first president,

Kenneth Kaunda, and the encouragement of inter-tribal marriage. The Government took the view that stimulating economic activity in rural areas would reduce poverty and bring about the active participation of those who had previously been excluded from economic activity. Most of the country's development programmes were already focused on investing more in rural areas. In particular, the Government was encouraging private-sector investment in such areas in agriculture and tourism through public-private partnerships. It was also investing heavily in infrastructure development; for example, it was building 650 health posts in rural areas and constructing roads to facilitate the distribution of farming products and inputs.

113. With regard to data-related challenges, a \$30 billion information and communications technology programme was under way to examine how technology could be used to increase operational efficiency across the country. A significant challenge was that currently data was often received much later than was necessary for planning purposes.

114. The Government was aware that discrimination against women remained the most pervasive form of inequality in Zambia, despite many efforts to improve the status of women. The 2011 Education Act promoted equality in access to, and the successful completion of, education, and the Government was also establishing new universities across the country to meet the increasing demand for higher education for women. It also planned to open a women's bank before the end of 2015, which should help drive women's economic empowerment.

115. With regard to climate change, the Government had been predominately considering renewable energy sources for development. However, deforestation had somewhat unexpectedly been revealed as a problem: not only was wood charcoal the primary source of energy in Zambia, but there had recently been an increase in the illegal felling of a species of tree that was highly valued for its timber.

116. **Ms. Virgill-Rolle** (Observer for the Bahamas) said that her country was like the Philippines in that it was an archipelago with the majority of the population concentrated in an urban centre. It also experienced similar data-related challenges to those that had been mentioned. Her Government was taking a phased approach to development planning to ensure it had a

solid evidence base to use in decision-making. The first phase involved in-depth consideration of the economy, social policy, governance and the environment. That would be followed by a general consultation and then the finalization of the plan in late 2015.

117. Her country was making efforts to promote grass-roots engagement and ensure the participation of the entire population, including civil society and the academic and private sectors. The comments from the presenters on how to build planning and development capacity and establish permanent institutions had been particularly useful in that regard, as had the policy notes on national development strategies developed by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

118. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) commended the Government of Zambia for its efforts to mainstream climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into its national development plans, despite significant challenges, and noted that the Zambian Government had recognized the drawbacks of a silo approach for all government departments, not only those working on climate-related issues.

119. He asked the presenters to comment on either their concerns about leaving the MDGs behind, on any mistakes their countries had made with regard to the MDGs, and on what excited them most about undertaking the sustainable development goals.

120. **Ms. Niyazalieva** (Kyrgyzstan) said that Kyrgyzstan had made significant progress towards achieving the MDGs, including radical reductions in poverty, child mortality and malaria, universal access to high school education, and gender equality in the parliament, where women now accounted for 25 per cent of the membership. The Government was also stepping up efforts to attract women to leadership positions, in the hope that they would account for fully 50 per cent of parliament membership by 2030.

121. However, problems still remained with regard to maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS, owing in part to a lack of budgetary resources and the high cost of health care. However, each year the country was receiving donor funds and accumulating further resources and hoped that the situation would soon improve. The high rate of maternal mortality was linked to the lack of highly trained and qualified medical personnel, especially in rural areas. Kyrgyzstan had initiated a programme for the training of doctors, especially in

rural areas, and included more training at the university level, in an effort to improve the situation. The country had also redefined its guidelines to broaden the scope of preschool education in order to achieve better results

122. In spite of serious budgetary constraints, the Government was still allocating substantial financial resources to social programmes. Salaries for teachers had increased by 50 per cent, while pay for medical staff had gone up threefold. Pensions and social welfare payments had also been increased. The next priorities for the sustainable development goals were to define guidelines for disease prevention. The Government was currently working with civil society to develop indicators for those goals and the post-2015 development agenda, focusing on the MDGs that the country had been unable to achieve.

123. Despite the country's limited resources, it was continuing to make contributions to goals 3 and 4 in particular. With 200 new indicators that it had developed, Kyrgyzstan hoped that it would be more successful in achieving the sustainable development goals than the MDGs. While the MDGs had been very broad, the sustainable development goals allowed countries to adapt all the indicators to their own realities.

124. **Mr. Khurelbaatar** (Observer for Mongolia) said that although his country had been able to achieve some of the MDGs, including poverty reduction, income disparity had increased and must be addressed through the sustainable development goals. Although half of the population of Mongolia lived in Ulaanbaatar, the city had received only 20 to 30 per cent of budgeted investments in pursuit of the MDGs. He hoped that funds aimed at the sustainable development goals would be better distributed. His Government's priorities were to achieve the remaining MDGs, build a more diverse and environmentally friendly economy and end alleviate the country's economic and financial problems.

125. **Mr. Balisacan** (Observer for the Philippines) said that poverty and employment were the two major development concerns in the Philippines, and in the medium term the Government would be focusing on substantially reducing poverty. The economy had gained traction over the past couple of years but poverty had not been reduced accordingly. Similarly, little progress had been made in generating quality

employment and levels of under-employment were high in rural areas. Creating high-quality jobs outside of agriculture would continue to be a priority for policymakers.

126. The Government was excited about the future and the shift to sustainable development concerns and had learned key lessons from both its national experiences and the experiences of other countries. It now had a better understanding of the importance of data and had been investing more to gain access to better and more reliable data, which would better inform its policies and decision-making. It was encouraging that stronger political commitments had now been made by national Governments and at the regional and global levels, and that better networking, coordination and linkages were facilitating the exchange of information about best practices. The Philippines looked forward to being part of the global community of learning.

127. **Mr. Mvunga** (Observer for Zambia) said that his Government was excited by the opportunities to learn from its failings in the implementation of the MDG agenda in order to optimize its implementation of the sustainable development goals. It recognized the importance of proper planning for budget coordination, which included ensuring universal buy-in from local stakeholders, including politicians, district-level governments, traditional rulers, non-governmental organizations and ordinary citizens. Failure to develop the tools for determining success and measuring progress had led his Government to lose sight of the importance of human development issues, such as the promotion of women and the equitable distribution of wealth, when planning its efforts to achieve the MDGs. He firmly believed that proper preparation would prevent poor performance in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

128. **Mr. Shank** (Director of Media Strategy, Climate Nexus) said that the presentations had offered useful lessons for the achievement of the sustainable development goals. It would be important to consider all sectors of the population to ensure that nobody was left behind. Grass-roots involvement would be essential to achieving the goals. Those involved in implementation would have to be prepared for the increase in e-mails and telephone calls that would result from greater coordination and communication.

129. It would be important to consider how to ensure that achievement of the goals would not be disrupted or

hindered by the political changes that would occur in most Member States during the implementation period. There would also need to be a focus on diversifying economies and making the transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Obtaining appropriate data was of vital importance, as was establishing definitive milestones to monitor progress. Governments should consider what had not been completed by the MDGs, whether they were ready to finish that work, and whether efforts to do so would take a different form under the sustainable development goals. He agreed that sustainable development entailed sustained commitment and that the sustainable development goals were relevant to all Member States.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.